

The Unfortunate Lady:

A brief

NARRATIVE

OF THE

LIFE, and Unhappy DEATH

OF THE

Lady Bennet,

Late of Buckinghamshire;

Who was most Barbarously and Inhumanly Murthered at her own House, on Wednesday the 19th of September, 1694. by a Butcher of Stony-Stratford.

To which is Added ;

An Account of the wicked Life of the said Butcher ; A full Relation of the Murther it self, and the manner of it ; Of the Ladies leaving behind her Fourscore Thousand Pounds in her own House ; Of the Butcher's Robbing her only of Three Hundred Guinea's ; And lastly, The manner of his Discovery, Apprehending before a Justice, and Commitment to St. Alban's Goal ; where he now remains till the next Assizes, behaving himself with great Penitence ; With his Prayer in Prison.

Licensed according to Order.

L O N D O N :

Printed for H. Maister, in Warwick-lane, 1694:



The Unfortunate Lady :

*Or, The Life and Death of Madam
Bennet, of Buckingham-shire.*

M Adam Bennet, the unhappy Subject of this little History, was a Person descended of worthy Parentage, Eminent for Virtue as well as Riches, from whom she had the Advantage of a Pious and well govern'd Education, being in her Youth accounted a Woman of great Wit, and answerable Beauty; insomuch that she was highly admired, for both, by an Ingenious Gentleman, whose Name was ——— Bennet, Esquire, being deriv'd of a Rich and Noble Stock, he rather Superior to her in Fortune, then inferior in Estate; but the Equality in their Families, and the admirable Qualifications and Endowments, made the Match reconcilable to the Friends on both sides, insomuch that the Nuptial Ceremonies were Consummated to the great Satisfaction of their Parents and Relations. They liv'd together many years under all the Content and Happiness they could expect to enjoy in the comfortable State of Matrimony; till Esquire Bennet, by an unbounded Generosity in good House-keeping, and Acts of Hospitality, had in some measure unwarily less'n'd his Estate. Having now several Children by his Lady, but all Girls, to whom he was a kind and indulging Father, occasion'd him to take into his serious

Consideration, the devastation he was likely to make of his Estate if he did not put a stop to his accustomary Liberality, which he did with timely Prudence, governing each Action by the Rules of Wisdom, reforming himself, by imperceptable measures, from what ought rather to be term'd Bounty than Extravagancy; so that in a short time he had recover'd his Estate to its primitive value, at which Juncture a Relation dying, left him additional Riches, amounting to Six Thousand Pounds a Year. Having this time truly enjoy'd the Pleasures of a temperate Life, (in which he found much more Satisfaction, than in the troublesom Disquiets and Interruptions of a splendid Galantry) and being now slid out of his Juvenal heat, into the calm and temperate Season of more graver Years, which inclin'd him to continue a reserv'd and sober Life; by which means he made so great an Improvement of his Estate, that (at last dying) he left his Daughters by Will, (which were three in number) Thirty Thousand Pounds each for their Portions, leaving them under the Protection and Guardianship of Madam Bennet, their Mother; who Married the Eldest to the Right Honorable the Lord Latimore; the second to the Right Honorable the Earl of Salisbury; and the third to Mr. Bennet, a worthy Gentleman of the same Name, and of an answerable Fortune: The old Lady, when she had thus dispos'd of her three Daughters, liv'd a very retir'd Life, seldom keeping any more than one Maid-Servant in the House with her: After this reclusive manner did she live for many Years, possess'd of three

or four Thousand Pounds *per Annum*, which was left her by Esquire *Bennet* her Husband not spending, as it is reported, so much as one hundred Pound in a Year, and living to above Eighty Years of Age, in which time she had made such an improvement of her Estate, that she had the Reputation of having by her, (for many Years last past at least Threescore Thousand Pounds in Gold and Silver, which was piled up in her Bed-Chamber (in loose Parcels) like Corn in a Granary She had always by her vast quantities of Corn, worth some thousands of Pounds, which she kept by her to sell to advantage in the time of Scarcity. She was taken notice of by all Persons to be very near and living whether through a desire of improving her Children's Fortunes at her decease, or whether to gratify some curious desire in herself, is left to the Works suggestion. She was observed never to keep up that Port or Grandeur answerable either to her Riches or her Quality.

It is said she went up a Ladder to her Bed-Chamber, which she used to draw up after her, letting down a heavy Trap-door, fortified with all the Engines of safety to secure her *Patrimonial* Paradise from the attempts of Robbers. Her Age hath led her at last, into such Jealousies and fears that she kept no Servant at all in her House for fear of being cheated or deceived by them; the advantage of which being taken by a Butcher, who liv'd at *Stony-Stratford*; a Person, who, by his Imprudence, had lost his Reputation, and the good word of his Neighbours, which

which at last had plung'd him into great difficulty; from under which it is suppos'd he thought to retrieve himself by the baseness of this following act on:

On Wednesday Morning about Nine of the Clock, he was observed to walk from home up towards the House of Madam Bennet, into which, by some Stratagem or other, he singly made his Entrance about Eleven of the Clock; a poor Fellow, who used to thrash for her, in one of her Out-Houses or Barns belonging to the House, was coming by the Garden Wall, over which he saw the Butcher climbing, to whom the Country-man cry'd, How now Friend! What have you been Robbing my Lady's House? to which the Butcher answered, No, I have not; to which the Country-man reply'd, you have been robbing the Orchard then; said the other, there is something in that, but prithee take no notice, and here is half a Crown for you; which the Fellow receiv'd, intending

tending to be silent ; but a Person, a little time after, having occasion to speak with Madam Bennet, went into the House, where they found her, on the floor of a Room, dead, with her Neck broak, and her Face turn'd behind her ; which barbarous Villany was soon spread abroad, and came to this poor Fellow as he was drinking in an Ale-house, who immediately up and told who he had seen come over the Wall, and what he had given him to remain silent : Upon this Assertion the Butcher and his Wife were taken with Three Hundred Guinea's in their Possession, which is supposed to be Money he had brought off, as a Booty, from the Murther'd Lady.

He behaved himself with great Insolence towards the Justice, who committed him to St. Albon's Goal ; his Wife, being taken at home, was committed to the County Goal of Buckingham ;

ham ; but we hear the Butcher seems something more Penitent since his close Confinement.

His Prayer in Prison.

O Most Gracious and Merciful God, I confess that my manifold Sins and Iniquities which I have committed, (and more particularly, that deadly and heinous Sin of Murther) have cried aloud for Vengeance : and that I have deserved Eternal Punishment : But I beseech thee, for thy Mercies sake to look down upon me, and to pardon and forgive me : O good God, for that small remainder of time which I have to live, make me more and more mindful of offering up my Prayers and Supplications unto thee ; and when I come to receive this Temporary Punishment, (as a just Reward for my Offences) that thou wilt be pleased to receive my Soul. These things, together with all others most needful and necessary for me, I humbly crave at thy Hands, for thy Son Christ Jesus his Sake. Amen.



THE
HISTORY
OF
FORTUNATUS.

